

EXCHANGE OF SPECIAL ORDER
TIME

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to claim the time of the gentleman from Texas (Mr. REYES.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Washington?

There was no objection.

LOGICAL WITHDRAWAL FROM
IRAQ

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. McDERMOTT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about an issue which is beginning to be much more of an issue in this Congress, and certainly in this country, and that is the question of how long are we going to stay in Iraq?

There are those who think that we should stay endlessly, apparently. The military is preparing for a couple of years of staying. Last week a couple of oil workers from Iraq came through talking to various Members of Congress. These 55-year-old Iraqi oil workers said there will be no peace in Iraq until the occupation is over. Until you leave, the present conditions will continue.

Now, there are a lot of people who still believe the President. Remember, this is the President that told us that there were weapons of mass destruction and there were connections to al Qaeda, and that now they have the White House saying we are in the last throes of the insurgency.

But when you talk to Iraqis who live on the ground, work on the ground, work in the oil industry, they said we are at 1½ billion barrels a day, and we will never get any more than that until we are able to get some peace and calm and some investments to come in and change the oil industry.

Now, you say, well, that is just two oil workers. Well, 82, remember that number, 82 Iraqi Parliamentarians have sent a letter to their Speaker of the House demanding that the U.S. withdraw its troops from Iraq.

Those are not wild-eyed people in the United States who are calling for the withdrawal of American troops. This is 82 members of the Iraqi Parliament who were elected. I mean, we say they have a democracy over there. Some of these leaders come from the United Iraqi Alliance, which is a collection or a coalition of religious Shiite parties that has a majority of the 275 seats.

So, again, we are not talking about a splinter group somewhere, we are talking about people in the main governing group in the Iraqi Parliament are calling for an end. Their demand is still, although not a majority, it is a large majority, and it has not been endorsed by the Prime Minister yet.

But the demand will certainly come from an ever greater number of Parliamentarians as time goes on. At the moment, most Iraqi politicians already wish the United States would leave, but are afraid that the guerilla movement will kill them without U.S. protection.

This letter has not been released in the United States. You have to find it somewhere on the Web. Now, in this House we have a group called Out of Iraq Caucus.

And the question is, what are we up to? What do we really want to do? Well, I think you ought to have a plan. And there are certainly a lot of plans that have been laid out. One of them is laid out by Gerald Helman, who was a former Ambassador of the United States, who says, first of all, the United States should have a phased withdrawal to be completed in 1 year.

□ 1915

Why is that? Because you do not want to create chaos. If we walked away tomorrow, we would have chaos.

The second thing he says, by prearrangement before that withdrawal occurs, the Iraq and Arab League, or collection of Arab states, would ask the United Nations Security Council to establish a transition political, economic development, and peace enforcement authority to assist the Iraqi Government in its recovery efforts. And finally, the United States could offer logistical support. We are really the only ones capable of doing it, and the financial support as well as the military units on a transitional basis under U.N. command, under U.N. command.

I think we can handle a Brit or a German or somebody being in command. The United States, Japan and the other oil Arabs can contribute money and NATO could provide much of the staff, planning and headquarters personnel, but competent boots on the ground will be hard to find. They are going to have to use some of our people. We all watched the United Nations do this very same thing in Cambodia. Most people were unaware of it, but that is exactly the method.

We have to begin the process of withdrawal from Iraq. There is no way we are going to win it all and have peace and harmony as long as we are viewed as conquerors and occupiers, and 82 members of the Iraqi parliament have asked. That must be only the beginning.

HELMAN ON UN OPTION

Ambassador Gerald B. Helman writes: "... On replacing the US with the UN in Iraq[:] It seems clear that US public opinion is ready for a real exit strategy. But I suspect that the Administration has not yet given up its hope of turning Iraq into a long-term strategic base and asset allowing control of the Middle East and the oil that goes with it. And to turn it all over to the UN would be humiliating. Much would depend upon how the process is rolled-out. Here's an example:

The US would announce a phased withdrawal, to be completed one year hence;

(by prearrangement) Iraq and the Arab League (or a collection of Arab states) would ask the UNSC to establish a transition political, economic development and peace enforcement authority to assist the Iraqi Government in its recovery efforts; and

The US would offer logistical (we're the only one capable) and financial support, as well as military units, on a transitional basis, under UN command (we might be able to swallow the humiliation if the commander is a Brit or German). The UK, Japan, the oil Arabs and others can contribute lots of money. NATO could provide much of the staff, planning and headquarters personnel. But competent boots on the ground might be harder to come by.

I agree that the Cambodia operation (and, more recently, East Timor) could serve as a model. While Cambodia was a mixed success, it was nevertheless a success."

THE UNITED NATIONS STRATEGY AS A
RESOLUTION OF THE IRAQ CRISIS

The United States has failed militarily in Iraq, and the situation there is deteriorating rapidly. A protracted guerrilla war is increasingly becoming an unconventional civil war. The US can mount operations against infiltrators on the Syrian border, but cannot permanently close off those borders. The US can prevent set piece battles from being fought by militias. It cannot prevent nighttime raids. Seven bodies showed up Sunday in East Baghdad, executed. They were almost certainly victims of this shadowy sectarian war.

Eighty-two Iraqi parliamentarians have sent a letter to the speaker of the house demanding that the United States withdraw its troops from Iraq. Some of the leaders of this movement come from the United Iraqi Alliance, the coalition of religious Shiite parties that has a majority of the 275 seats. Their demand is still that of a (sizeable) minority and has not been endorsed by Prime Minister Ibrahim Jaafari. The demand will certainly come from an ever greater number of parliamentarians as time goes on. At the moment, most Iraqi politicians already wish the US would leave, but are afraid that the guerrilla movement would kill them without US protection.

As its allies draw down their forces in the next few months, the US looks increasingly as though it is going it alone in Iraq. As a unilateral power there, it lacks legitimacy. It is not going to be able to stay in that country, and will not be given permanent bases there by an elected Iraqi government.

The United States will eventually have to go to the United Nations and request that it send a peace-enforcing mission to Iraq, as the US military withdraws. The relevant model is the UNTAC experience in Cambodia, which, while it had substantial flaws, was also a relative success. In the long term, perhaps 5-10 years, the Iraqi government may develop its own military that could keep order. That development is far enough off, however, that there is likely to be a significant gap between the time the US leaves and the time the Iraqis can fend for themselves.

A US withdrawal without a United Nations replacement would risk throwing Iraq into civil war. Such a civil war, moreover, would very likely not remain restricted in its effects only to Iraqi soil. A civil war in Iraq would certainly lead to even more sabotage of petroleum production, reducing Iraq's production from the current 1.5 million barrels a day to virtually nothing. If a civil war broke out that drew in Iran, the unrest could spread to Iran's oil-rich Khuzistan province, which has a substantial Arab population, and which has seen political violence in recent